

LWF Scholarships for Theology and Diakonia/Development

General Information

Through the scholarships program LWF works alongside its member churches in developing their capacity to serve effectively in their contexts. The scholarship program helps churches to acquire qualified personnel for spiritual care and diaconal work. The main criteria for a candidate approval is the church's corresponding need to increase its human and institutional capacity, either in areas of theology or diakonia/development.

Eligibility

- **Church affiliation of the candidate:** Only applications from active members of LWF member churches are considered. All applications must be endorsed and submitted by the church. No applications submitted by individuals will be considered.
- **Nationality of the candidate:** Only candidates from developing countries are eligible for scholarships in fields of diakonia/development. The theological scholarships are, in principle, open to candidates from all regions and countries.
- **Age limits:** The following age limits are in place, depending on the pursued degree and with certain exceptions, particularly for female applicants*:

Degree	Maximum age at the time of application*
Bachelor degrees	35
Master degrees	40
Doctorate	45
Post-doctoral/research	50
<i>*Special considerations:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For candidates who are church employees at the time of application, these age limits may be exceeded upon special request. - Relatively higher consideration is made for female candidates who exceed the age limits due to social and cultural factors which cause them to pursue studies later. 	

Overview of the Application and Approval Process

- **June | Kick-off of the application phase.** The information about the new application phase including updated application documents are sent to all LWF member churches and shared across LWF networks and channels.
- **July-September | Pre-screening processes in the churches.** Each church or national committee is supposed to do a pre-screening of all individual applications through its internal HICD committee or board. At the end of this process, each church prioritizes up to 5 candidates whose applications are being endorsed and forwarded to the LWF Communion Office in Geneva.

- **1 October | Deadline for applications.** A maximum of 5 applications per church may be submitted. They should be uploaded as proper scans via the personalized link shared in the information letter. A short notification message about the upload should be sent to scholarships@lutheranworld.org. It is no longer required to send hard copies to Geneva. Only if uploading of documents is not possible, the original applications may be sent to:
 The Lutheran World Federation
 Department for Mission and Development
 Diakonia and Development Desk
 P.O. Box 2100
 CH-1211 Geneva 2
 Switzerland
 Please ensure that the applications submitted via post reach Geneva before the deadline. Otherwise they cannot be considered!
- **October-November | Geneva screening process.** LWF/DMD reviews, pre-screens and short-lists applications.
- **December | Approval.** The candidates are presented to the LWF Scholarship Committee for approval. The Committee consists of LWF staff from different departments and staff from related agencies which support the scholarships program. The Committee takes final decision on approval of candidates.
- **January (of following year) | Information.** LWF/DMD informs the churches and national committees of the decisions taken by the LWF Scholarship Committee. Each church is responsible for informing the individual candidates about the outcome of their application.
- **January-December (of following year) | Scholarship implementation.** Implementation of approved scholarships has to start within one year. For candidates who are already on training, the scholarship will be activated for the following semester. No financial assistance can be paid retroactively for previous academic years or semesters. Each church or national committee is responsible for effective reporting, communication and follow-up with its approved candidates and the Diakonia and Development Desk.

Application Documents

- **Application Form for LWF Single Scholarships or Application Form for LWF Group Scholarships:** The respective application form has to be filled in by both the candidate/s and the head office of the endorsing church. The *Step-by-Step Guidance on How to Complete the Application Form* should be read carefully beforehand.
- **Attachments to the Application Form:** Applications are considered incomplete without attachments.

Scholarship Categories

- **Single program (single scholarship):** Only the proposed candidate is supported for study or training. The LWF will cover tuition and other study-related fees (such as fees for examination and library), a fixed book and medical allowance, as well as an adequate living allowance.
- **Single program with family policy:** The same conditions apply as for the single program. In case the candidate has children and further support is needed, an additional allowance for each child below the age of 12 might be considered upon request.

- **Group program (group scholarship):** A group consisting of 2 up to 10 persons pursues the same field and level of training together for similar or common area of engagement, and at relatively lower cost. (For instance, a group of five candidates from one church pursues a Bachelor's degree in Nursing in order to work in the church hospital afterwards.) A group scholarship is considered as one scholarship.

Scholarship Duration

- **Regular scholarships for study programs of at least 1 year:** The candidates are approved for at least 1 year of support to take up or complete their proposed study program. For candidates who have already started with their study program, this means that the study program has to last for at least 1.5 years at the time of application, hence 1 year at the time of approval.
- **Short-term scholarships for training of up to 1 year:** The candidates are approved for a short-term training which may last up to 1 year. This may include training courses, workshops, exchange programs or research projects which respond to the needs of the applying church. Application forms and selection criteria are the same as for regular scholarships.

Selection Criteria

- **Capacity needs of the church:** The proposed training field and degree has to respond well to the human and institutional capacity development needs of the church. The requesting church must demonstrate convincingly how a given application would meet a specific and crucial personnel need in its overall ministry in church and society.
- **Current and future position of the candidate:** All candidates are expected to have been in the service of the church and/or community as employees or volunteers. There has to be a clear commitment by the church to engage the candidate as employee or volunteer in an area related to the proposed training after completion of the candidate's studies/training.
- **Quality of the application:** The candidate must demonstrate convincingly his/her commitment, ability and motivation to pursue the training and to support the church afterwards (good educational and professional qualifications, recommendations and certificates, convincing character).
- **Study place.** The LWF encourages candidates to study in their home country or home region. In case a study or training program abroad is proposed, convincing reasons must be given in the application.
- **Gender and youth quota:** At least 40% of the approved candidates will be female; at least 20% will be youth below the age of 30 years. These quotas will not only apply to the overall approvals, but also to each church and region.
- **Regional balance:** The LWF seeks to ensure that candidates from different regions, countries and churches are being supported.

Questions and Answers (Q&A)

Questions by Member Churches or National Committees:

Q – How important are all the forms?

A – Very important. Make sure all forms are properly completed, and assist the applicants in filling their part of the application form if needed. Before completing the application form, read the Step-by-Step Guidance on How to Complete the Application Form carefully. Particularly cross-check or assist the candidates in indicating the expected costs per year of the study/training program on page 7, section 4.8 of the application form. Make sure applications include verified copies of educational certificates and that age limits are met.

Q – Do we have to apply in English?

A – No. English is preferred but applications also may be made in French, German or Spanish.

Q – What can we do to improve our chances for approval?

A – Have your HICD committee or relevant deciding body screen all applications. Ensure that the applications you select to be endorsed explain convincingly how the study or training would meet your church's needs.

Q – Do we need to send multiple copies?

A – No. Complete only one form and upload the application documents including attachments as proper scans via the personalized link shared in the information letter. Then send a short notification message about the upload to scholarships@lutheranworld.org. It is no longer required to send hard copies to Geneva.

Q – Where do we get application forms?

A – LWF/DMD sends updated application forms to the member churches each year in June. All forms are also available [online](#).

Q – What is our role during the scholarship period?

A – Before implementation of scholarships start, a contract – the so-called Terms of Award – is signed between LWF/DMD, the individual candidate and the church. In this contract, the church commits to actively accompany the candidate throughout his/her study or training. You are therefore responsible for effective communication and follow-up with your approved candidates and the Diakonia and Development Desk. In the Terms of Award, you also commit yourself to report on the candidate's engagement in church and society two and four years after completion of his/her studies.

Questions by Individual Candidates:

Q – Should I apply directly to LWF?

A – No. Any application must be endorsed and submitted by a LWF member church. Your church chooses candidates for programs based on their human resources planning. Please contact your church if you are interested in applying for a scholarship.

Q – I want to complete the application form, but find it very complicated. Where do I get help?

A – As a candidate, you are only supposed to complete part 4 and part 5 of the application form. Before you start completing the form, please read the Step-by-Step Guidance on How to Complete the Application Form carefully. Please approach your church which is supposed to assist you in filling in the form.

Q – Should I contact the LWF if my church has applied for training funding for me and I haven't heard back?

A – No. If you want to know the results of the application, please approach your church. The information about approval or decline of candidates is sent to all churches in January of the following year.

Q – If my scholarship application is approved, do I need to be in contact with LWF/DMD during the study/training period?

A – Yes. We are in contact with you during the whole scholarship period and support you throughout your studies. You are supposed to submit study and grade reports on a regular basis. Two and four years after you have completed the program you are required to report on how the training has assisted you in your work.